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AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

PRINCIPLES OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION,

WITH

REMARKS ON ITS INFLUENCE

IN THE

UNITED STATES.

✓

BY PHILALETHERS.



HARTFORD:

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1830.

September 12

Dear Mr. [illegible]

I have just received your letter of the 10th

and am glad to hear from you

and hope you are well

Yours truly

[illegible signature]

PRINCIPLES

OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION.

WHAT will be the condition of our country, an hundred years hence? This momentous question will receive very different answers, according to the moral views and feelings of those to whom it is addressed. While some are dreaming of an uninterrupted course of national prosperity, and are constantly descanting on the future greatness and glory of our country, as if her destiny were certainly known; others behold in the rapid inroads of vice, and error, and infidelity; and in the open and shameless manner in which the laws of God are trampled under foot among us, fearful symptoms of approaching dissolution. What will be the final issue of these things, none can tell but the Almighty. That vain politicians, who utter confident predictions of the future, know nothing about it, is as certain as the inspired declaration that "man is of yesterday, and knows nothing." This only we learn from the Bible, that "at what instant God shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it do evil in his sight, and obey not his voice, then he will repent of the good wherewith he said he would benefit them." I shall not attempt to enumerate all the dangers which threaten us. We need but open our eyes, and our ears, to see the bold profanation of the Sabbath, and to hear the scoffs of infidels; we have in our Southern States an immense mass of slaves, who are multiplying with alarming rapidity: our population is increasing at the rate of a thousand a day, and the current of emigration, which sets so strongly to the West, is rapidly bearing away this vast tide of immortal souls, beyond the light of the Bible, the Sanctuary, and the glorious gospel, into the valley of the shadow of death. All these things afford real grounds of apprehension, but as they have already been ably discussed, I shall not dwell upon them, but proceed to call your attention to another source of danger, which, though unknown to the mass of our churches, or little feared by them, is nevertheless of great magnitude; I mean the spread of the Roman Catholic religion in our country. Some will doubtless consider the

discussion of this subject as unchristian, others as unnecessary. The true character of the doctrines of the Romish Church, is little understood among us. Many good people are not aware how radically they differ from the pure word of God, and the precepts of our Saviour, and his Apostles. They have been accustomed to look upon Catholic errors, as trivial, and in no way interfering with the salvation of the soul. By such I shall be charged with narrow-minded illiberality, and they may be even ready to join with the Holy Mother Church, in the cry of persecution. Let us not be deceived, dear brethren, by this mistaken liberality, which can see no difference between persecution, and argument; and which is afraid that the truth should be told, lest it should offend. I shall utter no slanders against the Catholic Church; I shall make no assertions which I shall not endeavor to prove; if I persecute, it will be by exhibiting the nature and tendency of their sentiments, and if they cannot bear investigation, it is no fault of mine.

There are others, who though somewhat acquainted with the errors of the Church of Rome, do not believe it possible that they should prevail to any extent in this enlightened community. They are not aware of the spiritual darkness which envelopes many sections of our land, nor of the consummate skill, with which this cunningly devised religion, is adapted to the inclinations of depraved men.

I shall attempt to shew,

I. THAT THE SPIRIT OF THE CATHOLIC RELIGION IS IN DIRECT OPPOSITION TO THAT OF THE BIBLE, AND HIGHLY INJURIOUS IN ITS EFFECTS.

II. THAT THERE IS GREAT REASON TO APPREHEND AN EXTENSIVE PREVALENCE OF THIS RELIGION IN OUR OWN COUNTRY.

III. THE MEANS OF COMBATTING THIS ERROR, AND THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH IN THIS RESPECT.

Let it be remembered however, that my arguments, are addressed, not to *Catholics*, but to the *Protestant Churches of the United States*, and that I shall assume as the grounds of my reasonings, the principles which are universally admitted among them.

I. THE SPIRIT OF THE CATHOLIC RELIGION, IS IN DIRECT OPPOSITION TO THAT OF THE BIBLE, AND HIGHLY INJURIOUS IN ITS EFFECTS.

This will appear from the following facts.

1. The Church of Rome denies that the Word of God is the ONLY rule of faith and practice, commanding us to receive the

ordinances and traditions of the Church, with child-like obedience, and teaching that the scriptures are not alone sufficient to instruct us in our duty towards God.

As these principles are openly acknowledged by Catholics, it may seem superfluous to adduce testimony to shew that such is their belief. The following quotations from Catholic works of acknowledged authority in this country, will be sufficient.

Question. "*Are we bound to obey the commandments of the Church?*"

Answer. "Yes: because Christ has said to the pastors of the church" (and Catholics admit no church but the Church of Rome.) 'He that heareth you, heareth me,' and, 'he that despises you, despises me.' [Catholic Catechism, Chap. 5.] "The rules and ordinances of the Holy Church, are not to be counted amongst the *doctrines and commandments of men*; because they proceed not from mere human authority, but from that which Christ has established in his church, (meaning the Catholic Church,) "whose pastors he has commanded us to obey **EVEN AS HIMSELF.**" [Note on Matt. 15: 9, in the translation of the New-Testament approved by the Rt. Rev. John Dubois, Catholic Bishop of New-York, and circulated in this country.] "The unwritten traditions of the Apostles, are no less to be received than their Epistles." [Do. Note on II Thess. 2: 14.] "If we would have the whole rule of faith and practice, we must not be content with those scriptures which Timothy knew from his infancy, viz. the Old Testament, nor yet with the New Testament, without taking along with it, the traditions of the Apostles, and the interpretation of the Church, to which the Apostles delivered both the book and the true meaning of it." [Do. Note on II Timothy 3: 16, 17.] Sheil, a writer often quoted by Catholics, says, "When the whole canon of scripture was fully completed, there was no mention made even of the least care taken by the Apostles to divulge it in other languages, wherein it might be read to the nations then converted; which is a manifest sign that they thought all christians were sufficiently provided for, only by what they heard by word of mouth, and by the traditions of the church." [Section 24, 7.] That we may safely rely upon the traditions of the church, the church must be infallible; accordingly

2. *The Church of Rome claims infallibility.*

Question. "*Can the Church err in what she teaches?*"

Answer. "No: she cannot err in matters of faith."

Q. "*Why so?*"

A. "Because Christ has promised, that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church; that the Holy Ghost shall teach her all truth; and He himself will abide with her forever.'"* "That Christ may assist them, (the Apostles and their successors,) effectually in the execution of their commission, he promises to be with them; (not for three or four hundred years only,) but *all days even to the consummation of the world*. How then could the Catholic Church ever go astray; having always with her pastors, as is here promised Christ himself, who is *the way, the truth and the life*." [Catholic version, Note on Matth. 28: 18.] Sheil says "you see, therefore," (addressing himself to a Protestant) "by clear Scripture that the church cannot err," and in other places he speaks of the church as an infallible interpreter of the Scriptures, as we shall presently shew. Indeed the doctrine of infallibility, is interwoven with the very constitution of the papal church, and is so universally admitted, that it would be useless to spend words to prove it. We will merely notice the singular fact, that this attribute of infallibility, does not exist in any single individual in the Roman Church, not even the Pope, (as is now generally admitted,) but in the united voice of the fallible members which compose it. As far as I can learn the decisions and decrees of her councils, as those of Nice, Trent &c. are infallible, though no one of the members which composed them, possessed this mysterious attribute.

3. *The Church of Rome does not allow the circulation of the pure word of God, without note or comment, among her members, teaching that it is a dangerous book to put into the hands of the common people, without some one to guide them to the right understanding of it; that error, schism, and heresy are the certain consequences of studying it for ourselves, and that none but the true Church (meaning the Church of Rome,) is able to give the right interpretation of it.*

The fact that the Romish Church prohibits the perusal of the scriptures, in an intelligible language in all countries, where it is in her power so to do, is too notorious to require proof. We presume that no intelligent Catholic would hazard his reputation for veracity by asserting the contrary. If any one is credulous enough to believe that she encourages the study of God's word, unmixed with the doctrines of men, let him go into a Catholic country of Europe, and take their own authorised Bible, in the vernacular language, (if he can find one,) and begin to distribute it among the people. It will not be many days before his eyes will be fully open to the

true state of the case, and he will be glad to make his retreat into this land of freedom. In the United States, indeed, where Bibles and Testaments are abundant, and where the people will read if they please, she has thought proper to publish a Bible of her own, in self-defence, in which, as will hereafter be shewn, all the texts which militate against her doctrines, are carefully explained away by notes and comments, and every passage which can possibly answer the purpose is so interpreted, as to uphold the authority of the Papal church. Yet even this Bible, she is not, (it is believed,) very solicitous to circulate in those regions of our country which are destitute of the common Bible, but is willing that her disciples should receive the truth from her lips, as obedient children, and enquire no further.*

But the most pernicious doctrine of the Church of Rome, respecting the Bible, is, that it is a book of mysteries, capable of being understood and interpreted only by the church. She teaches that the word of God is "hard to be understood;" that "they that are unlearned and unstable wrest it to their own destruction," and that no "scripture is of private interpretation;" which, according to her infallible explanation, means, that no one has a right to understand the scriptures for himself, but must go to the Church for their sense. "We are to try the spirits, by examining whether their teaching be agreeable to the rule of the Catholic faith: for St. John says, he that knoweth God knoweth us, (the pastors of the church,) by this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. [*Catholic version, note on I John, 4: 1.*] Here we see that we are not to try the doctrines of a church by the Bible, but we are to try her interpretation of the Bible, by that of the Church of Rome, (the only true church, as all Catholics maintain,) and that the pastors of the Catholic Church are as worthy of our faith and obedience as John and his companions, and this in fact the Church of Rome does most constantly teach. We have seen above, that the Apostles delivered to the primitive church, "both the book and the true meaning of it," and this true meaning is to be learnt from the traditions of the Church of Rome. Sheil says, "you (protestants) stand in need of some infallible guide, to tell you which is the undoubted sense of these true copies," (viz. those which protestants consider as canonical, for Catholics hold the Apocryphal books also to be canonical,) "and which is not; but you who will not hear the

* Perhaps I am incorrect in this assertion. If so, the Catholics can contradict it by producing facts. It must be acknowledged, indeed, that they have little to fear from a Bible, numbered as theirs is, with the interpretations of the church. See more on this subject hereafter.

church, are not taught by scripture, which guide you are to follow in this matter." *Chap. 24.*] He then advances a step further, and makes the following assertion, which however monstrous it may seem, expresses the true belief of Catholics. "We believe the scriptures to be the word of God, because the church (which we believe to be infallible,) tells us so, and we believe the church to be infallible, by her traditions delivered to her by the Apostles before any Scripture was written, and we believe tradition by its own credibility, and we give all the firm assent to what the whole church proposes to us as the true word of God. Our understanding adheres so unmoveably to this, that the testimony of an angel could not make us believe it is false." Fletcher also, an eminent Catholic writer, says, "If men be all allowed to judge, and believe, each according to the dictates and suggestions of his own private feelings and capacity, then it is plain, that every varied form, both of error and absurdity, is but the natural consequence,"—and again, "For my own part, I think this—that, if there existed no other reason to engage a pious mind *at once* to reject protestantism, except the above principle," (viz. allowing every person to judge for himself of the meaning of the Bible,) "and the evils which are attendant on it—these alone should suffice to do so." [*Fletcher's View, Chap. 12.*] This doctrine that the Church of Rome alone understands the meaning of the Bible, like the frosts of the Polar circle, checks the career of reason and conscience, and locks them up in torpid insensibility.

" —Miserable they !

Who here, entangled in the gath'ring ice,
Take their last look of the descending sun ;
While full of death, and fierce with tenfold frost,
The long, long night incumbent o'er their heads
Falls horrible."

This it is, which makes it so difficult and hopeless a task to reason with a Catholic. "His understanding adheres so immoveably to the doctrines of the church, that even the testimony of an angel could not make him believe them false."

But, as the Church of Rome professes to be the only interpreter of the Bible, let us attend to some of her explanations : and here I shall confine myself to the New Testament.*

The following extracts are from the authorised Catholic version.—Matthew 3 : 1, 2. In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the desert of Judea ; and saying *Do penance* : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Note to the above.—"This word, *Do penance*, according

* These extracts are taken from the Douay Testament.

to the use of the Scriptures and the Holy Fathers, does not only signify repentance and amendment of life, but also punishing past sins by fasting, and such like penitential exercises." So throughout the New Testament, the words "Repent," and "Repentance," are translated "Do penance," and "penance," except where such a translation would lead to evident absurdity, as in Heb. 12: 17. where it is said that "Esau found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears," which the note very properly explains as meaning, "He found no way to bring his father *to repent, or change his mind.*" Why the word does not always have this meaning, we are not informed.

Matthew 12: 32. He that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.

Note. "From these words St. Augustine and St. Gregory gather that some sins may be remitted in the world to come: and consequently that there is a purgatory or middle place."

36 verse. For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it, in the day of Judgment.

Note. "This shews there must be a place of temporal punishment, hereafter, where these slighter faults shall be punished."

For the notes on Matth. 15: 9. see above.

Matth. 16: 18, 19. And I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, &c. On this passage there are several prolix notes, the substance of which is, that "Peter was appointed chief pastor, ruler, and governor; and should accordingly have all fulness of ecclesiastical power, signified by the keys of the kingdom of heaven," and that "loosing and binding," mean, "loosing the cords of temporal punishments due to sins, called an indulgence, the power of which is here granted."

Matth. 26: 26, 27. Take ye, eat—this is my body. And taking the chalice, he gave thanks; and gave to them saying, Drink ye all of it.

Notes. "He does not say, this is the figure of my body, but this is my body: neither does he say, *in this*, or *with this*, is my body, but absolutely, This is my body: which plainly implies transubstantiation. *Drink ye all of it.* This was spoken to the twelve Apostles, who were the *all* then present. But it no ways follows from these words spoken to the Apostles, that all the faithful are here commanded to drink of the chalice." Our readers will recollect that Catholics deny the cup to the laity.

For the note on Matth. 28 : 18, see above.

Luke 1 : 48, Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Note. " These words are a prediction of that honour which the church in all ages should pay to the Blessed Virgin." What that honour is which Catholics pay to her, shall hereafter be shewn.

Luke 16 : 9. Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.

Note. " By this we see that the poor servants of God, whom we have relieved by our alms, may hereafter, by their intercessions, bring our souls to heaven."

Luke 17 : 10. We are unprofitable servants ; we have done that which we ought to do.

Note. Because our service is of no profit to our master ; and he justly claims it as our bounden duty. But though we are unprofitable to him, our serving him is not unprofitable to ourselves ; *for he is pleased to give by his grace a value to our good works, which in consequence of his promise, entitles them to an eternal reward.*"

Luke 23 : 43. This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

This the note says is " Limbo, the place of confinement of departed saints, which was now made a paradise by our Lord's going thither."

John 20 : 19. Now when it was late that same day, being the first day of the week, and the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood in the midst.

Note. " The same power which could bring Christ's whole body, entire in all its dimensions, through the doors, can, without the least question, make the same body really present in the sacrament."

Verse 23. Whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them ; and whose ye shall retain, they are retained.

Note. " See here the commission, stamped by the broad seal of heaven, by virtue of which the pastors of Christ's church absolve repenting sinners upon their confession.

Romans 4 : 7. Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

Note. " That is, blessed are they who by doing penance have obtained pardon and remission of their sins, and also are covered, that is newly clothed with the habit of grace, &c."

Romans 10 : 15. How can they preach unless they be sent ?

Note. " Here is an evident proof against all new teachers, who have all usurped to themselves the ministry, without any

lawful mission derived by succession from the Apostles, to whom Christ said, John 20: 21. as my father has sent me, so also I send you."

I might make a multitude of similar extracts, but will only add one passage, which is grossly misinterpreted to suit the convenience of the Papal Church. The first clause of Heb. 13: 4. is thus literally translated. "Marriage honorable in all." Which the note explains to mean, *Let marriage be honorable in all things*, instead of, *Marriage is honorable in all persons*, which is the idea conveyed by our translation. This interpretation is given to save the credit of the Church of Rome, who forbids her pastors to marry; but whether it be the most rational way of filling out the sentence, let the candid judge.

4. *Many of the practices of the Church of Rome are contrary to Scripture, and others are unprofitable and unauthorised by the word of God.*

Such are the following.

(a) *Invocation of Saints and Angels.*

Catholics deny that they worship Saints and Angels, and maintain that they merely request an interest in their prayers, as we do in the prayers of our pious friends. "If it be lawful," argues the bishop of Aire, "to solicit the prayers of our living friends, how can it be unlawful to solicit the prayers of our dead friends?" The following are some of their prayers.

A prayer entitled The Litany of the Blessed Virgin. "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin.

Lord have mercy on us.

Christ have mercy on us.

Christ hear us, Christ graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven, Have mercy on us.

God the Son, the Redeemer of the world, Have mercy on us.

God the Holy Ghost, Have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, one God, Have mercy on us.

Holy Mary, Pray for us."

Here the Blessed Virgin is joined in company with the Holy Trinity. In this same Litany she is addressed by no less than 44 epithets, some of which are, "Mother of Divine grace, Virgin most merciful, Virgin most powerful, Mirror of Justice, Seat of Wisdom, Ark of the Covenant, Gate of Heaven, Refuge of sinners," and "Queen of all saints."

Another prayer. "O Holy Virgin, Mother of God, and *sure refuge of all poor sinners*, intercede for me at this moment, &c. &c."

Prayer to our guardian angel.—"O Holy angel to whose care God in his mercy hath committed me; you, who assist me in all my wants, who console me in my afflictions, who support me when dejected, and who constantly obtain for me new favors; I return you now most sincere and humble thanks: and I conjure you, O amiable guide, to continue still your care; to defend me against my enemies; to remove from me the occasions of sin; to obtain for me a docility to thy holy inspirations; to protect me, in particular, at the hour of my death; and then to conduct me to the mansions of eternal repose. Amen."—[*Catholic Manual, Dublin.*]

Other similar prayers may be found in Catholic prayer books addressed to St. Joseph, &c. [See appendix A.]

(b.) *Reverencing of images, pictures, relics, crucifixes, &c.*

Sheil says, "Why should we be called idolaters, for making and venerating such images, as may put us in remembrance that Christ was crucified for our sins." The second council of Nice, declares, that "the honor paid to the image passes to the prototype; and he who *adores the image*, adores it in the person of him whom it represents." The council of Trent also says, "Due honor and veneration is to be given to the images of Christ, of the mother of God, and of the saints; not that there is believed to be in them any divinity or virtue, for which they are to be worshipped, or that any confidence is to be placed in the images, but because the honor which is given to the images, is referred to the persons represented by the images; so that by or through the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads, or lie prostrate, we adore Christ and reverence the Saints, *whom these images represent.*"

It appears from these quotations, that Catholics worship not images, *but adore Christ, and reverence the Saints through the images which represent them*, which is precisely what the Heathen, both ancient and modern have done, and what is forbidden in the second commandment.* Did the ancient pagans adore the Statue of Jupiter, or Jupiter through the statue? The most ignorant pagan, in bowing down before his idol, supposed "Not that brass and gold and silver, when fashioned into statues are gods; but that, through these images, the invisible gods are honored and worshipped. [*Arnobius, quoted by Faber.*] Do not Catholics make to themselves the likeness of the Virgin Mary, and of our Saviour? Do they not bow down to them? Do they not kiss them, and uncover their heads, and lie prostrate before them? What is this but worship? It appears then that Catholics are guilty of

* The first in Catholic books.

idolatry, not figuratively, but literally, in the strictest sense of the word. Many good people in our country consider it slander to accuse the Catholics of idolatry, but we have their own testimony on the subject, for the **DECREES OF THE COUNCILS OF NICE, AND TRENT, ARE INFALLIBLE**, according to the unanimous belief of all Catholics, who appeal to them as of the highest authority.* [*See appendix B.*]

(c) *Prayer for the Dead, and the doctrine of Purgatory.*

Q. *Are the souls in Purgatory helped by our prayers?*

A. Yes; they are.

Q. *What do you mean by Purgatory?*

A. A middle state of souls, suffering for a time on account of their sins.

Q. *In what cases do souls go to Purgatory?*

A. When they die in less sins, which we call venial; or when they have not satisfied the justice of God for former transgressions.

Q. *How do you prove there is a Purgatory?*

A. Because the Scripture often teaches, that "God will render to every man according to his works:" and that "nothing defiled can enter heaven," and that some Christians "shall be saved, yet so as by fire." [*Catholic Catechism, Chap. 2.*]

It ought to be added however that the more candid writers among the Catholics, do not pretend to prove the doctrine of Purgatory from Scripture.

Having given a definition of Purgatory, in the language of papists, we will next exhibit some of their prayers for the souls confined therein. These are taken from the Roman Missal, in use in this country, answering to the Prayer Book of Episcopalians, translated by Bishop England, and whose authority no Catholic would dare to contradict.

"O God, we humbly present our prayers to thee in behalf of the soul of thy servant N. which thou hast this day called out of the world: beseeching thee not to deliver it into the hand of the enemy, or to forget it forever: but command it to be received by the holy angels into paradise, &c."

Another. "Receive O Lord, our prayers in behalf of the

* The following tremendous anathemas are from the Second Council of Nice; they remind us of the Jews in our Saviour's time, who, when confuted by him *were filled with madness*, and sought how they might destroy him. "Anathema to the calumniators of christians! Anathema to the breakers of images! Anathema to those who apply to images the scriptural denunciations against idols! Anathema to those who refuse to salute the holy and venerable images! Anathema to those who call the holy images idols! Anathema to those who aid and abet the dishonourers of the holy images!"

Behold here the beast which has two horns like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon.

soul of thy servant N. that if any stains of the corruptions of this world still stick to it, they may be washed away by thy forgiving."

An *Anniversary* mass for the Dead.

"O God, the Lord of mercy, give to the soul (souls) of thy servant (servants) whose anniversary we commemorate, a place of comfort, a happy rest, and the light of glory."

Our readers will recollect that these absurd petitions, are not the obsolete prayers of the dark ages, nor the prayers of the dark regions of papal dominion, but are used at the present day in our own enlightened country.

(d) *Auricular confession, and remission of sins, by indulgences and satisfaction.*

These things will be best described, in the language of Catholics.

Q. *What is confession?*

A. Confession is the accusation of our sins to a priest, in order to obtain absolution of them.

Q. *Must we declare all?*

A. Yes, we must declare all; for, if we were wilfully to conceal any mortal sin, we should not obtain the remission of any, and should besides commit a sacrilege.*

Q. *In what sentiments should we place ourselves upon our knees before the priest, when we are going to confession?*

A. In the sentiments of a criminal WHO IS ABOUT TO OFFER HONORABLE AMENDMENT TO GOD; VIEWING JESUS CHRIST IN THE PERSON OF THE PRIEST.

Q. *What is absolution?*

A. It is the remission of our sins, which the Priest imparts in virtue of the power, he has received from Christ.

Q. *What is an Indulgence?*

A. An indulgence is a remission of the temporal punishment, due to sin either in this life or in the life to come.

Q. *How many kinds of Indulgences are there?*

A. There are two kinds; the partial indulgence and the plenary indulgence.

Q. *What is a partial Indulgence?*

A. It is that which remits only a part of the temporal punishment due to sin.

Q. *How is this kind of Indulgence expressed?*

A. It is expressed by saying, for example, an Indulgence of twenty days, of an hundred days, &c.

* David however says, "Who can understand his errors." How long does it take a Catholic to confess all his sins?

Q. What is a plenary Indulgence?

A. It is that which includes the entire remission of the temporal punishment due to sin.

Q. Do all equally gain a plenary Indulgence?

A. No: each one receives the benefit of it, only according to his disposition.

Q. What is satisfaction?

A. It is a reparation which we owe to God, or to our neighbor, for the injury we have done him.

Q. Are we obliged to satisfy God, even after the sin has been remitted us?

A. Yes we are: for although the eternal punishment be remitted us by absolution, yet there remains a temporal punishment which we have to expiate, either in this world, or in the world to come.

Q. How do we satisfy God?

A. We satisfy God by the works of penance, which we perform in the grace of Jesus Christ, through whom we live, we merit, and we satisfy.

Q. Which are the best works of penance?

A. Those which are imposed upon us by the priests: such as chiefly, prayer, fasting and alms. [*Catholic Catechism, various places.*]

It clearly appears from the above, as well as from many quotations before given, (and many more might be added if necessary,) that Catholics are taught to rely on the penances assigned to them by the priest, which are here denominated good works, as meritorious in securing heaven, *through the virtue imparted to them by Christ*. Thus do they engraft their own worthless ceremonies and imperfect services upon the all-perfect righteousness of Christ, robbing him of the glory of their salvation, and deceiving their own souls. This is the most dangerous shape in which self-righteousness can appear. Nothing is better suited to soothe the conscience and lull it to security. The poor deluded worshipper resigns his soul into the hands of the Holy Church, and thinks his salvation sure, if he heartily obeys her directions, and sincerely performs the good works imposed upon him by his priests; and under the quieting influence of this spiritual opiate he sleeps securely, till his redemption has ceased forever.*

* Whatever the friends of the Catholic Church may say in her defence, it is evident that her devotees do sincerely believe that they obtain the pardon of their sins, by this round of duties, at the hand of the priest, and thousands of them die under the influence of this awful delusion, in the firm hope of future happiness. "If the blind lead the blind shall they not both fall into the ditch."

I might go on to enumerate other things equally contrary to scripture, such as, Works of Supererogation, The Doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the sacramental bread and wine, &c., but I should transgress the limits which I have prescribed to myself.

The ceremonies of the Catholic Church are exceedingly numerous, and many of her ordinances frivolous and unprofitable, such as abstaining from flesh on Fridays, and Saturdays, fasting from midnight before we go to communion, the violation of which, the church calls "a great sin," crossing ourselves with Holy Water, &c. The Catholic ritual is exceedingly magnificent, and admirably calculated to strike the senses of the vulgar. The unknown language in which her priests officiate, gives her an air of great ancientness, and induces ignorance to think, that she alone possesses the treasures of wisdom and learning.

The above is a faithful, though imperfect exposition of the Catholic religion, as it exists in this country. From this it appears how mistaken is the idea of those who suppose that Catholicism here, is quite a different thing from Catholicism in Europe. This no true Catholic would be willing to admit for a moment. His boast is that the Holy Church is the same in all ages and all countries. She does indeed appear among us disrobed of the civil power; we are not compelled to fall prostrate before the ceremony of the Host, neither are we liable to have our Bibles taken out of our hands; but for this let us thank God and the Protestant religion. The tendency of Catholicism is to reduce all nations to a common level. Her dominion over her disciples is not less absolute here, than in Europe: the chains with which she binds reason and conscience, are not less strong; and were she universally to prevail, there would soon be no difference between us, and the Catholic nations of Europe.

II. THERE IS GREAT REASON TO APPREHEND AN EXTENSIVE PREVALENCE OF THE CATHOLIC RELIGION IN OUR COUNTRY.

I readily admit, that were all our countrymen well instructed in the Bible, there could be little reason to apprehend danger from papal influence. But where ignorance of the word of God, and consequent immorality prevail, there is a fearful preparation in the minds of the people for the reception of error; and no error will be more greedily imbibed than this. The Church of Rome, does, in effect, guarantee the salvation of all who will entrust themselves to her care. She kindly relieves them of the burden of taking care

of their immortal interests, and they have only to make a hearty surrender of their souls to her keeping, and blindly follow her directions, as obedient children, and they are sure of reaching heaven: and even if some stains of pollution adhere to their souls at death, they are assured of an interest in the prayers of the church, and cheered with the prospect of a speedy release from the pains of Purgatory, to the mansions of everlasting rest. What can be more pleasing to a blinded mind, and unholy heart? Who would not much rather *do penance*, than *repent*, and submit to the yoke of Christ? How admirably is the papal doctrine of good works, adapted to the inclinations of the natural heart? No sensible man, who knows the history of Popery in Europe, will despise her influence. "She has cast down many strong men." She has held most of the nations of Europe in bondage for centuries. Some have represented the Catholic system as a mass of absurdities, which even a child could refute. But "men of full age" have had enough to do, to grapple with her. She has the combined wisdom of ages, and is undoubtedly the master-piece of error. Is human nature in America different from human nature in Europe? Will not the same causes which have given Popery an ascendancy in the old world, also gain her dominion in the new?

It must be admitted then, as a maxim not to be disputed, that **OUR NATION HAS NO PRESERVATIVE AGAINST POPERY, EXCEPT IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.**

Let us then look at the condition of our country. Are all our citizens enlightened? Are there no dark places in our land, where the Bible is unknown, where the Sabbath is profaned, and the people are perishing for lack of knowledge? Even in New-England do not we find in our populous towns multitudes, who know little more of the word of God, than Heathen?

But it is not New-England that has the most to fear from Papal influence. The Church of Rome has chosen the valley of the Mississippi, as the grand theatre of her operations, and no one will question the sagacity of the choice. What is the condition of the valley of the Mississippi? The heart of the christian must bleed, when he beholds the immense tide of immortal souls, that is rolling over this fertile vale with unexampled rapidity, and then looks at the moral darkness which rests upon it. A large part of the people are destitute of the Bible; they have no preached gospel; vice and infidelity consequently abound; in this condition they are pre-

pared to be led away "by every wind of doctrine, and cunning craftiness of men who lie in wait to deceive them."

Those who ridicule the idea that Papacy may ever gain an ascendancy in our country, are requested to look at the following facts.

1. It is morally certain that in the course of at least a century, the vale of the Mississippi will contain a population sufficiently large to give her a predominance in our national councils.

2. We have already shewn that the moral character of the inhabitants is highly favorable to the propagation of this error.

3. The Church of Rome has set in operation an extensive plan for the conversion of this region to her doctrines.

For this purpose she is establishing schools, and colleges, in various places, for the education of the young; her missionaries are abroad in all directions, zealously propagating her sentiments; they want not energy or perseverance; many of them have consecrated themselves to the work, with an ardor and devotedness becoming a better cause. I impeach not their motives; "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge": they want not sagacity nor prudence; most of them have been thoroughly educated to the business, and understand the art of accommodating themselves to the circumstances of society: accustomed to bow down their ear to auricular confession, they understand human character and the art of managing mankind: they want not foreign patronage: this may possibly be new to some of our readers. It appears from a late paragraph in one of the Catholic papers, that a Catholic priest "has recently departed for Havre, where he is to meet some priests who have devoted themselves to that (the Ohio) Mission.* This gentleman was educated at the College de Propaganda at Rome. He has been successful in France in procuring aid for the mission in Ohio, *but he has in Vienna established a society to aid the progress of the truth, and in Munich the King of Bavaria has become a protector of a similar association.*" It appears then that the Catholics in the West are beginning to enjoy the patronage of European princes; and that Catholic countries are liberally supplying us with teachers "of the truth." No doubt they will receive a sufficient supply of gold and silver, to enable them to carry on their proselyting establishments without embarrassment. "Let him that read-

* We learn by a late Catholic paper that Mr. Reze, with nine ecclesiastics has already arrived.

eth understand." Thus to use the pompous language of Catholics, the time seems to be coming, when "the spread of Catholicity will encompass us on all sides, and bring us to the knowledge of the God of truth, and of *that* Church the Interpreter of the Bible."

We are then to view this great valley of the mother of rivers, as destined to be the theatre of a moral contest, almost unparalleled for importance in the history of man. This is the field of action; here the battle is to be lost or won, which is to decide the moral condition of unborn millions: the conflict is not for any earthly object, but for immortal interests; for the purity of religion; for the right of using the reason which our Creator has given us, in the study of his most holy word; for the privilege of obeying God, rather than man; and of confessing our sins to our Maker, and not to a sinful worm like ourselves. This conflict will be decided in a few years, and its decision will be attended with consequences, compared with which, those of Pharsalia and Waterloo, sink into insignificance. We may not live to behold its termination, but our children will see and feel the issue.

III. WE ARE TO CONSIDER THE MEANS OF COMBATTING THIS ERROR AND THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH IN THIS RESPECT.

1. *The first and most obvious duty of the Church is to awake to the subject.*

While we are securely reposing, dreaming that "our mountain stands sure, and that we shall never be moved," the Church of Rome is vigilantly improving the opportunity which our supineness affords her. She kindly encourages our inactivity, and wisely recommends us to follow the prudent advice of good old Gamaliel. Already has she more than half persuaded some of our members, that it is best to sit still, and not stir a finger against her, if not to patronize her operations. If we will not arouse, and pray and labor; if we will obstinately persevere in our belief that there is no danger, we shall hereafter bitterly repent our folly.

2. *We ought to acquaint ourselves with the character of Popery.*

The impression prevails extensively among American Protestants, that Catholic doctrines and practices are comparatively pure in this country, and that the Church of Rome is not chargeable with those monstrous absurdities which have been attributed to her; and there will always be those found among the enemies of evangelical religion, impudent enough to advocate this opinion. Many think it a crime to assert that the Papal Church claims the prerogative of pardoning

sins, and enjoins the worship of saints, angels, and images ; although her priests every where declare that they do pardon sins, and although her forms of devotion abound in idolatrous prayers to saints, and angels, and we may see with our eyes her devotees doing homage to pictures, crosses, relics, &c. Let us then examine this matter for ourselves, that our opinion may rest not on authority alone, and we may not be abashed by bold contradiction. The history of the Romish Church should also be studied. Her arrogant pretensions to be the only true church, can all be confuted, and her traditions shewn to be contrary to scripture, and unworthy of belief ; but if we are not prepared to meet her plausible and sophistical reasonings, we may be much embarrassed by them.

3. *We ought to make use of the information thus acquired to defend the truth.*

This may be done in various ways : by personal and friendly intercourse with Catholics themselves, as far as practicable ; by the circulation of books calculated to throw light on the subject ; many excellent treatises have been written in which the errors of popery are confuted with great force and clearness ; by the distribution of such tracts as already exist, and the preparation of others adapted to the wants of the community : these will be very useful if they are written in a mild, plain, and christian manner, avoiding all asperity, and seeking only to advance the truth ; but if they be written in a harsh, abusive style, they will be worse than nothing. It may be added, that every tract which clearly exhibits gospel principles, contains in itself a refutation of error, and those which display false doctrine in its true light, without reference to sects, will be read with less prejudice, and consequently with more profit. The opinion of Catholic priests with regard to tracts, may be gathered from the fact that they discourage the perusal of them among their people, by all the means in their power.

It may be indeed the desire of Catholics that we should remain silent, and many Protestants may think a controversy of this kind inexpedient : but I know not by what logic it can be proved that we ought to sit still, and see error industriously propagated. We may not, it is true, be able to convert Catholics ; but by a clear exhibition of the truth we may prevent the spread of it, among indifferent persons, and if any man will, after being enlightened, embrace error, his blood must be upon his own head.

4. *We are loudly called upon to extend a more efficient and liberal patronage to the American Home Missionary, Bible and Tract Societies.*

The Home Missionary Society sends out pastors to break the bread of life to those who are famishing for lack of knowledge. The Bible Society gives the pure word of God, which enlightens the eyes, and makes wise to salvation. The Tract Society diffuses the rays of gospel light, over this benighted region. I will not insult your understandings by eulogising these institutions. I only ask you solemnly to enquire how much does the Lord require you to give. Are you doing your duty in this respect?

The American Sunday School Union deserves our warmest support in the efforts she is now making for the spread of Sabbath Schools in the West. If we can but establish these blessed institutions in the vale of the Mississippi, she will be safe from error. Those who have been nourished and brought up on the "pure milk of the word" cannot easily be induced to relish the husks of popery. Blessed be God for the establishment of Sabbath Schools in our land! otherwise we should soon be swept away by the floods of error. Four hundred dollars will support an Agent in the West. How many of our County and State Unions, might easily do this, and thus prove a rich blessing to thousands? This has already been successfully undertaken by at least one County Union,* and we hope others will soon follow the example.

5. *We should be more vigilant in searching out and training up young men for the ministry.* Let pious pastors and teachers have an eye to this work. Let not indications of youthful talents and piety, escape the notice of the watchmen of Israel. Let the instructors of youth carefully examine the texture of the minds which come under their care; and whenever they find uncommon strength, activity or enterprize, let them be consecrated to the Lord in the closet, and recommended to the patronage of the church. Let pious fathers and pious mothers, be willing to part with their sons when Christ calls them to follow him. Parents! who of you have children destined to receive the reward of those who turn many to righteousness, and to shine as the stars of the firmament forever and ever? Methinks you cannot but rejoice and thank God when he calls you to part with them. Let those whom God has entrusted with wealth, esteem it a most delightful task to take young men by the hand and assist them in their studies, trusting to God, that he will prepare

*The Hartford County Sabbath School Union.

their hearts by his grace for being stewards of the mysteries of the gospel. What a multitude of laborers might thus be sent forth into the vineyard of the Lord!

6. *Finally, brethren, "pray without ceasing."*

I would not have taken up my pen to write to you, had I not hoped to excite you to more fervency at the throne of grace. The Lord Jehovah alone holds our destinies in his hands. He has suffered this error to creep in among us. Perhaps it is to draw our hearts closer together, to make us feel our dependance on him, and quicken us in the performance of our duty: perhaps to make us feel more sympathy for the nations of Europe who are groaning under the papal yoke: perhaps he designs to manifest his Almighty power, by carrying on his gospel in the midst of opposition, and thus secure the glory to himself. Let us "trust in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Let our missionaries in the West enjoy our liberality, and be upheld by our prayers. We ought most earnestly to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in the valley of the Mississippi. The "man of sin" is to be destroyed by "the brightness of Christ's coming." If the Lord do not interpose for the inhabitants of the West, they will be undone.

I close with one reflection. How important that pure and undefiled religion should flourish in our schools, and colleges. A vast multitude of youth is here training up, to become either the efficient friends, or the determined enemies of Christ. With what inexpressible longings ought the church to look upon these institutions! How fervently ought she to pour forth her prayers in their behalf, that the Lord would visit them by his grace, and make ready a people prepared for his service! "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest: Pray ye therefore, the Lord of the Harvest that he would send forth laborers into his vineyard."

APPENDIX A.

The following extracts from the Roman Missal, on the one hand, and the Bible on the other, will shew in a striking light, the difference between the Catholic, and Scriptural way of approaching God.

ROMAN MISSAL. THE LITANY OF SAINTS. (*In part.*)

Lord have mercy on us.
Christ have mercy on us.
Lord have mercy on us.
Christ hear us. Christ graciously hear us.
God the father of heaven *have mercy on us.*
God the Son, Redeemer of the World *have mercy on us.*
God the Holy Ghost *have mercy on us.*
Holy Trinity, one God. *have mercy on us.*

BIBLE.

WAY TO APPROACH GOD.

"Father into thy hands I commend my Spirit." Luke, 23: 46.
"Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit." Acts, 7: 60.
"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matth. 11: 28.

Holy Mary,
 Holy mother of God,
 Holy Virgin of Virgins,
 St. Michael,
 St. Gabriel,
 St. Raphael,
 All ye holy Angels and Archangels,
 All ye holy Orders of blessed Spirits,
 St. John Baptist,
 St. Joseph,
 All ye holy Patriarchs and Prophets,
 St. Peter,
 St. Paul,
 St. Andrew,
 St. James,
 St. John,
 St. Thomas,
 St. James,
 St. Philip,
 St. Bartholomew,
 St. Matthew,
 St. Simon,
 St. Thaddaus,
 St. Matthias,
 St. Barnaby,
 St. Luke,
 St. Mark,
 All ye holy Apostles and Evangelists,
 All ye holy Disciples of the Lord,
 All ye holy Innocents,
 St. Stephen,
 St. Lawrence,
 St. Vincent,
 St. Fabian and St. Sebastian,
 St. John and St. Paul,
 St. Cosmas and St. Damian,
 St. Gervais and St. Protesa,
 All ye holy Martyrs,
 St. Sylvester,
 St. Gregory,
 St. Ambrose,
 St. Augustin,
 St. Jerom,
 St. Martin,
 St. Nicholas,
 St. Patrick,
 All ye holy Bishops and Confessors,
 All ye holy Doctors,
 St. Anthony and St. Bennet,
 St. Bernard,
 St. Dominick,
 St. Francis,
 All ye holy Priests and Levites,
 All ye holy Monks and Hermits,
 St. Mary Magdalen,
 St. Agatha,
 St. Lucy,
 St. Agnes,
 St. Cecily,
 St. Catharine,
 St. Anastasia,
 St. Bridget,
 All ye holy Virgins and Widows,

Pray for us.

"Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." John 6: 37.

"Every man that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me." John 6: 45.

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."

"For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4: 14, 15, 16.

"But this man (Christ Jesus) because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God, by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Heb. 7: 24, 25, 26.

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. 9: 24.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

And having an High Priest over the house of God;

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. 10: 19, 21, 22.

What need have we then of the intercession of Saints and Angels, which is nowhere commanded in Scripture?

